

Zinc pennies make debut in '83 proof sets

By Roger Boye

In just eight days—on May 2, to be exact—Uncle Sam will begin accepting orders for 1983 proof sets, the first to include copper-coated zinc cents.

Although the price is still \$11 a set—unchanged since 1981—some hobbyists had wanted a reduction because the new sets won't include a special Treasury Department medal. Mint bosses inserted the medal into 1982 sets in what apparently was an experiment to fill the spot once occupied by Susan B. Anthony dollars.

Despite the cost, bureaucrats expect a huge influx of orders for the popular collectible during early May. As usual, workers will accept orders for about two months unless they receive an unusually large number that will surpass production capacity. [Last year the government sold about 3.9 million sets in a 73-day ordering period that started Feb. 1.]

As a rule, of course, the more sets produced, the lower their resale value in the coin market. For example, the government unloaded 4.1 million proof sets for \$11 each in 1981, the second highest total on record. Those sets retail for about \$10 in today's sluggish coin market.

To order a 1983 proof set containing five coins [cent through half dollar], send a check or money order to Bureau of the Mint, 55 Mint St., San Francisco, Calif. 94175. The limit is five sets per customer or per address, and the mint promises to mail sets by next Dec. 31 at the latest.

Proof coins are made with specially prepared slugs and dies to create a mirrorlike finish free of blemishes. Collectors consider them the apex of the minting art.

● In the most significant improvement since the sale of uncut currency began in October, 1981, Uncle Sam has added a four-bill sheet to its collectibles containing 16 or 32 bills.

The new sheets, arranged in a column four high, cost \$9.50 for four \$1 notes or \$14.50 for four \$2 notes. Prices of the other offerings are \$28 for 16 \$1 bills, \$45 for 16 \$2 bills and \$47 for 32 \$1 bills.

To order, send a check or money order to Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Uncut Currency Sales Program, 14th and C Streets, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20228. Allow four months for delivery.

● About 10 coin dealers will sell their wares next Sunday at the 18th annual show of the Mundelein Coin Club. Hours are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Holiday Inn near the intersection of U.S. Hwy. 45 and Ill. Hwy. 83, south of Mundelein. Admission is free.